

[Mr. J. C. Montgomery]

Mrs. C. May Cohea P.W.

Amarillo, Texas

District #16 PANHANDLE PIONEERS

Interview with: Mr. J. C. Montgomery

President of First National Bank,

Memphis, Texas

(Mr. Montgomery approved the history already prepared of Memphis and added a few items of interest on old Salisbury and the Indian scare of 1891 and of the eccentric Col. Hughes, whose estate still owns the Rocking Chair ranch near Wellington).

Mr. Montgomery, whose father was the founder of Memphis, was just coming into manhood at the time of the Indian scare. He was rather undecided whether it was 1890 or 1891, but said perhaps the latter date was correct. The scare started when Mr. Huddleston saw cowboys on the Rocking Chair ranch near Wellington killing a beef. Mr Huddleston rode his mule to death to get to town with the news. The agent at Salisbury sent out the news and added that he was leaving immediately. It was about dusk when the news was brought to Wellington and about midnight at Memphis. The Rev. Price organized the men at the latter place and drilled them so that they would be prepared to defend the town from the expected attack. Mr. Montgomery remembers that he was sent out to Dr. Cannon's house about a mile from town to warn him, but the doctor just grunted and turned over in his bed and went back to sleep. A Mr. Huddleston now lives at Estelline, perhaps the same one who acted the role of Paul Revere in the Indian scare.

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In the early days old Salisbury grew up on the Fort Worth and Denver; however, when Memphis was established, all the inhabitants moved to the new town site. Nothing remains of Salisbury today. The original community of Salisbury was established by R. E. Montgomery, no relation of the Mr. Montgomery who founded Memphis. R. E. Montgomery was a townsite man for the railroad as it built through the Panhandle. He arranged for towns every seven miles or so, thus bringing Salisbury into existence. The site of Salisbury is about 3 and a half miles southeast of Memphis, the ground being farmed over at the present. For some time the basement or foundation of the old Salisbury hotel remained to mark the spot, but nothing can be seen on the site. [Today?] a farm house sits on the site of W. L. R. Dixon's store at old Salisbury. Tom J. Cox 2 was Dixon's store manager in Salisbury. Mrs. Ewing, another old-timer of Salisbury, was buried near one of the mounds in the vicinity.

Mr. Montgomery knew the eccentric owner of the Mill Iron and the Rocking Chair ranches, Colonel Hughes, who loved to hunt, bringing his bird dogs, several at a time, with him from Denver to hunt on the range, which he made into a preserve, one still being kept on the Rocking Chair by his descendants. His daughter comes out from Denver to visit the ranch near Wellington at the present time.

A negro drove the four fine horses which the colonel had to his coach, a huge thing, larger than a motor car and smaller than highway coaches. The coach contained sleeping quarters and cooking facilities, thus resembling the trailers of the modern time. Once when Hughes was crossing Salt Fork near Wellington, the coach mired in the sand. Taking out the horses the party left the coach and went to get help to extricate the lumbering vehicle. On their return, the coach had disappeared, having sunk in the treacherous quicksand.

Colonel Hughes maintained a hunting lodge neat Estelline on the Mill Iron until he established a game preserve on the Rocking Chair.

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The daughter of his manager of the Mill Iron, Bob Green, is now Mrs. Arthur Eddleman of Estelline. Buck Eddleman, her father, was an old cowboy on the ranch.

Joe Birchfield, caretaker of the Hughes ranch near Wellington, should still be living there.

Large ranches in the region of Hall County in the early days were the Shoe-Bar, owned by T. S. Bugbee, the Mill Iron, by Hughes; the J. A. by Adair-Goodnight; the 96, by J. A. Finch; and the Diamond-Tail, W. R. Curtis.